

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
2 February 1987**FILE ONLY**REPORTER TRIED TO SNEAK INTO CASEY ROOM
WASHINGTON

Washington Post Watergate reporter Bob Woodward, now covering the Iran arms scandal, tried to bluff his way into CIA director William Casey's hospital room last month, the hospital and the CIA said Monday.

CIA and Georgetown University officials said Woodward made the attempt to enter the seriously ill Casey's room on Jan. 22 but was refused admission.

Woodward's attempt was first reported in Monday's edition of the Washington Times.

Casey, 73, whose resignation as intelligence chief was announced by the White House Monday, is recovering at the hospital from surgery performed Dec. 18., a day after he suffered a seizure. Doctors removed part of a cancerous brain tumor.

Casey had been scheduled to testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee on the Iran arms controversy on Dec. 19.

In its first positive report in weeks, the hospital said Monday Casey "continues to improve steadily."

"He is alert," the statement said. "He has visited several fellow patients and went to (Roman Catholic) mass at the hospital chapel yesterday. He will continue to receive radiation treatments and physical therapy for several weeks at the hospital."

The Washington Times story said Woodward "crept up to the door of Casey ... and demanded to be let in."

"The nurse on the door shook her head," the account said. "She had her orders. The gravely ill director of the CIA ... would have no visitors except his immediate family and any others specifically authorized by the family."

Woodward was reported to have replied, "But he sent for me. He wants to see me."

"No visitors," the nurse responded.

"Look," Woodward said, according to the story, "let me just put my head through a crack in the door"

A supervisor was called "to deal with the man's impudent persistence," the paper said. "The supervisor demanded identification. Only then did the man say -- reluctantly -- that he was Bob Woodward of The Washington Post."

A spokeswoman for the hospital said The Washington Times story was "basically correct" and the CIA also confirmed the story.

Woodward was not immediately available for comment.

With fellow Washington Post reporter Carl Bernstein, Woodward won the newspaper a Pulitzer Prize for their investigative reporting on the Watergate scandal leading to the resignation of President Richard Nixon.